



Caring Hands Humane Society

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KITTENS

You will need to purchase some or all of the following items:

- Syringes, 3cc., 6cc., 12cc.,
- Eye Dropper
- Bottles with Nipples for Kittens
- Kitten Milk Replacer (powdered keeps longer)
- Heating Pad

Creating a Nest

Kittens will need a pet taxi or box with sides high enough they can not climb out. Warmth is the most important thing to remember. Wrap several layers of towels around a heating pad in such a way the kittens can't get under them causing severe burns. The box should be big enough that an area without heat is available should they need a cooler spot to lie for awhile. Sometimes the heating pad can be placed under the box. (Lori Smith – our Kennel Manager always puts the heating pad underneath the kennel to avoid cord mishaps and electrocution hazards.) Locate your kittens' nest in a quiet draft free area

Feeding

Hold your kitten in an upright position (45 degree angle on his stomach) in the palm of your hand or cuddled in a towel. Gently insert the nipple into the kittens mouth lifting up and outward so his head is slightly above his body. He will usually stop nursing when he is full. Nipples come in many sizes, the larger the nipple the larger the hole. I have found you can usually purchase a nipple with a small tit on it from a farm supply store; these nipples will usually fit over the top of a soda bottle and work well at delivering the right amount of milk to newborns. It also seems the fussiest of eaters prefer the feel of this nipple. If milk is coming out of his nose, this generally means the hole in the nipple is to large. If you can not get your kitten to drink the milk you will have to use a syringe or eye dropper.

Feeding Schedule

- **0-1 ½ weeks** – 3 cc. about every 2 hours (around the clock)
- **1 ½ weeks** – 6cc. about every 3 hours (around the clock)

- **3 weeks and older** – 12cc. about every 4 hours (around the clock)

A good rule of thumb is 30 ml. (2 Tbs.) per day for every 4 ounces of body weight; of course this is divided into the 2, 3 or 4 hour schedule. Usually I feed until they stop sucking or it seems to be ending up all over their face instead of their stomach. Try to avoid letting liquid of any type into the nostrils as kittens lungs are very small it doesn't take much to cause pneumonia. The first week of your kittens' life they will eat and sleep if they are getting enough nourishment, around 1 ½ weeks they will begin opening their eyes and they will let you know when they are hungry. Kittens that are not getting enough nourishment will have prominent hip bones and cry continuously. A steady weight gain of about 1/3 of an ounce per day is recommended but don't be alarmed if they stay at the same weight a couple of days, chances are the next day you will see a sudden gain. As the kittens grow the number of feedings and the frequency will diminish. If you have a kitten that just won't eat I have found if you mix 1 spoon full of Karo syrup into 6 ounces of milk, they will eat.

The above is a guide to start with, every kitten is different and adjustments will need to be made.

Elimination

This is very important. You will need to gently massage the anal and genital area with a warm cotton ball to stimulate elimination. This will cause your kitten to urinate and have a bowel movement. You will need to continue doing this until you are positive they are having movements on their own. The skin is very delicate and can become raw, if this happens apply a tiny dab of Preparation H to the affected area. Kittens will not always have a bowel movement after each feeding. As long as they are urinating, eating, growing and not showing signs of distress, you should not have any worries. It is also necessary to rub their little tummy to relieve air bubbles.

- Normal stools are firm and yellowish and average two per day
- Loose and yellowish stool may indicate a slight case of overfeeding, try diluting the formula with unflavored Pedialyte by 1/3 until normal stool returns then gradually increase the formula to full strength
- Loose and greenish stool would indicate food is moving through your kittens' system to fast and the bile is not being absorbed. Probably caused by moderate overfeeding, again cut the formula back with Pedialyte. Two or three drops of Kaopectate can be administered every four hours until this clears up.
- Stools that look like cottage cheese may indicate that the formula is too rich, there is severe overfeeding, or your kitten may have a bacterial infection. This kitten may require antibiotics and should be seen by a veterinarian.

- Constipation would indicate that you need to increase the strength of the formula and feed slightly smaller amounts but more frequently. If your kitten has a swollen stomach and hasn't had a bowel movement in over a day you might try 3 drops of mineral oil by mouth for each ounce of body weight.
- Before placing your kittens back in their box check to make sure it is clean, dry and warm.
- Gently wipe your kittens face to remove any formula

You must ALWAYS protect you kittens from disease.

- Wash your hands before and after handling them
- Always sterilize your bottles, nipples and utensils in boiling water after each use
- If your kittens did not have the opportunity to nurse from mother after birth they are more susceptible to illness and should be kept away from all other animals.

Weaning

Every animal is an individual and just like your own children they will develop at different rates. At four weeks most kittens will begin to show interest in solid food. Place a small amount of formula on the tip of your finger and encourage the kitten to lap it up. If she will not lap it up smear it around her lips, she should clean herself, thus getting the formula. This will help develop her lapping skills. Next you can take a very small amount of dry kitten food, add formula, allowing it to soak until most of the liquid is absorbed. She should readily lap up all of the formula but don't be surprised if she turns her nose up at the moistened food. If necessary continue to supplement with a bottle once or twice a day. Keep a bowl of quality dry kitten food available to her at all times, lamb and rice formula is the easiest to digest. If by five weeks she has still not investigated the moistened food, find something with a high degree of odor to it, this will stimulate your kittens' appetite and encourage her to eat. Gerbers baby food (yes it is safe) lamb, chicken or turkey is a good place to start and it is easy to lap up. Mix it well with the dry kitten food, maybe even smashing the kitten food into smaller bite size pieces. Once they start eating the moistened dry food you will want to decrease the amount of moisture you are adding to it until they are eating solid dry food only.

Dehydration

Dehydration will be your kittens biggest enemy, the easiest way to check if he is dehydrated is to grasp the skin between the shoulder blades, lift straight up with a twisting motion as you release it. Well hydrated skin pops back within a second or less. If the skin takes to long to return your kitten will need medical intervention.

CHHS Staff